

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01  
ACDA-07 /076 W

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R 081725Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1370  
INFO AMEMBASSY MUSCAT  
SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L LONDON 03879

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: PFOR, MU, UK, US  
SUBJECT: MASIRAH ISLAND

REF: LONDON 2984

1. DAY, ASSISTANT HEAD OF FCO MIDDLE EAST DEBT, BRIEFED EMBOFF MARCH 7 ON PROGRESS OF BRITISH ARRANGEMENTS TO PHASE OUT RAF BASE ON MASIRAH, AS FOLLOWS: ON THE LEGAL SIDE, THE BRITISH HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO "TIDY UP" THE EXCHANGES OF LETTERS ABOUT THE STATUS OF THE BRITISH MILITARY PRESENCE IN SALALAH AND MASIRAH. SOME OF THESE LETTERS HAD BEEN EXCHANGED WITH THE FORMER SULTAN, AND THE OFFICERS PRESENTLY IN THE FCO MIDDLE EAST DEOT HAD BEEN UNAWARE OF THEM. PROBABLY THE OMANIS HAD ALSO BEEN UNAWARE OF THEM, SINCE THE FORMER SULTAN MAY HAVE SHOWN THEM TO NO ONE. THE KEY PUBLIC DOCUMENT GOVERNINQ THE RELATIONSHIO IS THE EXCHANGE OF LETTERS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE OF 1958, WHICH CONSTITUTED AN "ENABLINQ" INSTRUMENT AND WHICH REMAINS IN EFFECT. A SERIES OF EXCHANGES OF LETTERS IMPLEMENTING IT WITH SPECIFIC REOARD TO MASIRAH AND SALALAH ARE BEINO CANCELLED. THE EXCHANOE OF LETTERS  
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COVERINO SUPPLY AND ORACTICAL ARRANOEMENTS FOR THE BRITISH EASTERN RELAY STATION IS BEING REOLACED BY A MODIFICATION, WHICH HAS POSED NO OROBLEM. OTHER DOCUMENTS COVERING BRITISH PERSONNEL REMAIN VALID.

2. THERE IS STILL ONE LOOSE END WITH REQARD TO BRITISH STAGING RIGHTS FOR OCCASIONAL FLIGHTS USING MASIRAH.

AS WE HAVE REPORTED, THE RAF WANTS TO CONTINUE TO HAVE LANDING RIGHTS IN MASIRAH, ALTHOUGH IT DOES NOT CONSIDER THIS REQUIREMENT TO BE VITAL. THEREFORE, THE BRITISH EMBASSY IS BEING INSTRUCTED TO ASK THE OMANIS IF THEY WISH SUCH OCCASIONAL USE TO BE COVERED BY A NEW EXCHANGE OF LETTERS. IF THE OMANIS DO NOT WISH SUCH A FORMAL EXCHANGE, THE BRITISH PLAN TO DEAL WITH LANDING REQUESTS ON AN AD HOC BASIS. ACCORDING TO DAY, DESPITE THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE RAF BASE, IF THE RAF WANTS TO LAND AN AIRCRAFT ON MASIRAH ON APRIL 2, IT CAN STILL DO SO.

3. AS REGARDS PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TURN-OVER, SAID DAY, ALL IS GOING SMOOTHLY. THE OMANIS WANTED THE BRITISH TO FILL UP THE FUEL TANKS, BUT THE BRITISH WERE UNABLE TO BECAUSE OF THE MONSOON AND TANKER UNAVAILABILITIES. THE VALUATION OF ASSETS PROBLEM WAS TAKEN IN HAND BY A WORKING PARTY WHICH LEFT THE NON-REMOVABLE ITEMS AND SOLD SOME REMOVABLE ITEMS FOR JUST OVER ONE MILLION POUNDS STERLING. THE RESULT IS THAT THE BRITISH WILL LEAVE TO THE OMANIS AN OPERABLE AIRFIELD.

4. IF THE DEPARTMENT HAS ANY SPECIFIC QUESTIONS ON THE STATUS OF MASIRAH AIRFIELD, WE CAN TAKE THEM UP DIRECTLY WITH THE UK MINISTRY OF DEFENSE. WE DO NOT PLAN TO RAISE THIS MATTER WITH THE FCO AGAIN UNTIL SO INSTRUCTED.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009